Member's proposal would be equally convenient for purposes of civil jurisdiction. He deplored that the question had been pending final decision for the last 30 years and prayed that the same be soon settled in conformity with the opinion of the majority of the people of the locality as represented by him.

Dewan's reply.—Government have not come to any final decision in regard to the shifting of the Court. The Member's representation will be carefully considered.

43. Transfer of Civil Decrees direct from Devicolam to British India.

Mr. G. W. Cole (Member, The Kannan Devan Planters' Association) requested that power be given to the Devicolam District Munsiff's Court to transfer civil decrees direct to British Indian Courts instead of through the Parur District Court as at present. The existing provision of law caused inordinate delays which frequently enabled a debtor to remove his funds and property beyond the jurisdiction of the court to which the decree was transferred, thereby defeating the ends of justice. The Member pointed out that, if power was given to the Devicolam Commissioner to transfer decrees direct, it would be of considerable help to all employees of labour under its jurisdiction.

Dewan's reply —I quite appreciate the difficulties in your having to go to Parur. The High Court have not sent their reply in regard to this matter. We have to consult the British Government as to whether the British Courts will accept the decrees forwarded by a Munsiff of this State and take action thereon. First of all we have to find out whether there is any objection from our High Court, and, if they have no objection, we shall have to address the British Government in the matter. I shall take the necessary action, and let you know the result in due course.

IV. PRODUCTION, AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRIES.

44. Disabilities of the ryots of Travancore.

Mr. K. G. Thomas (Member, Nominated) began by expressing satisfaction at the Dewan giving immediate replies to the representations of the members of the Assembly, whether those replies were favourable or otherwise. He requested to convey to His Highness the Maha Raja the sentiments of loyalty and thankfulness of the ryots of Central Travancore for the innumerable benefits they had been enjoying at the hands of His Highness' Government.. Out of the total cultivable area of 30 lakhs of acres of land in this State only 21 lakhs were under actual cultivation, and out of this 15 lakhs of acres were cultivated with grain and other food crops. Calculating on that basis, the average earning of an agricultural labourer was only 10 *cash* per day, while including rubber and sugarcane cultivation it came to one *chackram* per head. The average annual earning per head in Travancore came to only Rs. 12-12 as. and the people had to meet all their expenses from this very small amount. The Member, therefore, requested Government to do everything in their power to increase the earning capacity of the people. He admitted that the Agricultural Department was rendering every help to the ryots, but it was not encouraged by Government adequately. Coming to the cultivation of cocoanut, he said that 25 lakhs of trees were affected by pests. The disease which originated some years ago had now spread over 18 taluks. It, therefore, behoved Government to take special efforts to root out the disease.

The Member then referred to the revised Agricultural Loans Rules and observed that the rate of interest was high and should be reduced to the original rate of 4 per cent. The condition of Mysore was quite different and it should not be taken as a basis of comparison. He complained that the amount of Rs. 200 allowed to be given on personal security was too small to serve any useful purpose and suggested that it should be raised to at least Rs. 500. Among the other suggestions of the Member were the following, viz.,

(1) that a sum of 5 lakhs of rupees be set apart every year for the grant of agricultural loans;

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(2) that facilities be afforded for irrigation in Central Travancore;

(3) that the export of manure be stopped;

(4) that Municipal Councils be asked to sell night soil and other manure to *bona fide* agriculturists at a cheap price; and

(5) that a Board of Agriculture be created.

The Member also complained that special facilities were not afforded to the people of Central Travancore in the matter of agricultural loans and irrigation.

Dewan's reply.—The Member refers to the low annual income derived from land by the people of this country. That is a defect which is common to the whole of India. There is no doubt whatever that there is a vast field for increasing the yield of land. But this could be brought about only gradually, and the Agricultural Department, I believe, has done something in this State to increase the output of agricultural produce. The Agricultural Department must go on persistently working at it. It is not a matter the results of which could be felt in one or two years. The ryots must intelligently follow up the experiments made by the Agricultural Department. They must co-operate with the Department and profit thereby. I am glad to see that the ryots do co-operate here with the Agricultural officers more than elsewhere. If the ryots follow the instructions of the Department, I am sure that the yield will increase. The Member has laid a charge at the door of the Government that they do not encourage the Agricultural Department. I am afraid that that charge is not quite fair. Since I came here, I have been trying to do all that I can for the Agricultural Department, and I do not think that there has been one instance in which I refused to give what the Director wanted with a view to expand the usefulness of his Department. If the Director of Agriculture makes out a case and says "I want to forge ahead in this line and I want so much money for it", Government would try their very best to give him what he wants. He wanted money for an Agricultural Middle School at Alwaye and it was given to him. I myself suggested the need for a dairy farm and the opening of more demonstration farms and new seed depots. The Director is also making many suggestions and we are increasing the grants to the Department. The Members know what amount has been allotted for the present year. They also know the allotment in the previous years. They will see that the current year's allotment is much more than the allotment for previous years.

The Member refers next to the cocoanut palm disease. It is a matter of vital concern to this country. It is a matter which gives me very great anxiety. Dr. Kunjan Pillai has been telling me that the ryots do not heartily co-operate with the Government in combating this pest, and that the instructions given by him are not carried out by the ryots readily and fully. The ryots must change that attitude, and if they would co-operate, I would ask the Director to employ more people and train up more people. The want of experts and trained men is a great handicap at present. As far as we can do it, we shall be glad to employ more people to take measures to combat this pest. I know it is a very important matter for the ryots of Travancore.

Then, the Member refers to Agricultural loans and complains that the maximum of Rs. 200 for loans on personal security is very low. The maximum was only Rs. 100 till recently and it was I that raised it from Rs. 100 to Rs. 200. I have done it at some risk. The State is after all but a trustee of the public. The money which the State handles is only the money which the public contribute to its coffers, and I should not adopt a measure in a hurry which would cause loss to the State. These loans on personal security are meant for very poor agriculturists who cannot raise even one hundred or two hundred rupees from the nearest banker or who have no resources to fall back upon. It is for such people that these small loans are mainly intended. In the case of these small loans, I have even dispensed with collateral personal security. If people want bigger amounts, proper security must be forthcoming. Otherwise, there is the risk of Government losing the money advanced. This is the reason why the present maximum is adopted. In course of time, if people repay regularly and the State does not incur much loss, Government will be very glad to raise the maximum limit of personal security loans.

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Then, in regard to interest, there is great force in what the Member says. But he must also consider the other side of the question and see what Government stand to lose by ear-marking lakhs of rupees for this business. These are days of financial stress, and if money which is required urgently elsewhere is ear-marked for this purpose, and if we are put to the necessity of borrowing for carrying out other administrative activities, then we shall have to pay interest. You know the ruling rate of interest. It is very high. The Mysore Government recently floated a loan at 7½ per cent interest. The loan of the Government of India carried 7 per cent interest. It is in view of all this that I was not able to fix the rate of interest lower than 6¼ per cent. The Member wants to have it at 4 per cent. The Government have to consider all the activities of the State in this connection. We cannot show too much partiality to one activity to the detriment of others. I shall, however, consider the point noted by the Member. He has referred to agricultural farms. They are meant for demonstration purposes, *i. e.*, to satisfy the people what return they can get out of a particular crop on a particular soil by the adoption of particular methods of farming. Agricultural farms are managed by Government servants. It is a matter of common knowledge that the cost of management by Government servants must be much higher than what a private man incurs. Therefore, no useful comparison can be made between the profit and loss accounts of Government agricultural farms and those of private farms.

The Member referred to manures. That is also a very important matter. The Director has been mentioning more than once to me that we should do something to check the export of manures from this country. The matter is not a simple one and is under consideration.

Then the Member referred to the Municipal Councils and said that they do not co-operate with the ryots in regard to the disposal of night soil. I believe you know that Government suggested at one of the Municipal Conferences that night-soil should be turned into good manure, and that, while the Councils could make money out of it, it would be to the benefit of the agriculturists who are resident within municipal areas and their immediate neighbourhood. Government offered to place an Agricultural Inspector at the disposal of the Councils subject to the condition that they should pay for his services. The Councils demurred and the Government then said that they would even forego the pay of the officer and place his services at their disposal free. Nevertheless, not a single Municipal Council has applied to me for the services of an Agricultural Officer for this purpose. So, the responsibility for this does not lie with Government. Municipal Councils are free bodies and it is they that must take the initiative in the matter.

The Member next refers to the inadequate facilities offered to Central Travancore ryots in the shape of agricultural loans, the improvement of irrigation facilities, etc. In regard to agricultural loans, the fault is not that of the Government. I have ear-marked one lakh of rupees for 1097. I am prepared to increase that amount, if necessary.

Member.—The Government have appointed a special officer for South Travancore.

Dewan.—He has been appointed not for granting loans only, but chiefly for expediting the conversion of dry into wet lands under the Kodayar. The Member's point is, I believe, that a special officer should be appointed for the whole of Travancore for the grant of loans. I shall consider it. That again means money. If applications are made, the revenue officers will dispose of them promptly. Government will also increase the allotment, if necessary.

In regard to irrigation, it seems to me that the more important thing to be attended to in this country and, especially in Central Travancore, is drainage and not irrigation. Drainage is a problem which we have not tackled scientifically yet. We must have an expert for the purpose. I am considering the question of deputing one of our Engineers to get special training.

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With regard to Agricultural Boards there are two gentlemen now who are agriculturists on the Economic Development Board.

Member.—They have some interest in agriculture, no doubt.

Dewan.—The Economic Development Board can be further strengthened, if necessary. But there is no use in multiplying these Boards. The existing Board must be made more useful. The suggestion to make the representation of agriculture more effective will be considered.

45. Agricultural improvements of the State with special reference to the Kottarakara taluk.

Mr. C. P. Kochukunju Pillai (Member, Kottarakara Taluk) first referred to the important part agriculture plays in the economy of the State. He then dwelt at length on the various kinds of cultivation as they stood at present and suggested what could be done by the State to improve them. Taking paddy cultivation, the Member said that rice formed the staple food of the country and for the last 5 years the State had been importing on an average 51 lakhs of rupees worth of paddy and 106 lakhs of rupees worth of rice, and that Government had so far done very little to increase local production. Though the area of arable lands was almost stationary, population was on the increase, and the tendency of the present day was to reduce even the existing area available for paddy cultivation, by converting it into cocoanut gardens or, what was worse, into house sites as was the case in big towns.

There was also the sub-division of holdings which was being effected to a far more minute degree than was desirable in the interests of available cultivation. The conversion of paddy lands into house-sites should be checked through the intervention of Municipal Councils. With a view to increase the available area, a system of well irrigation should be introduced, and steps should be taken to raise water to higher levels by means of gasoline engines. The Government should order a survey of the lands fit for paddy cultivation and induce people to convert them into paddy fields. The Agricultural Engineer whose appointment was in contemplation should be asked to make an investigation in one or two Divisions for irrigation, well-sinking and drainage. Paddy cultivation might also be extended by throwing open the large tracts of wet land now included in reserves. What are called *karikkone* lands which people formerly used to cultivate with paddy should also be similarly thrown open. Government should further help the people with more liberal loans of money, machinery and manure for the yearly cultivation of the *punja* lands in Kuttanad. By these steps the production of rice could be considerably increased in the country.

The Member then made the following suggestions for increasing the output of agricultural produce :—

(1) Cheap and improved implements of agriculture should be supplied to the people through the Agricultural Department which should be liberally financed for the purpose ; the village carpenter and the village blacksmith should be taught to make and sell better and cheaper kinds of plough.

(2) Facilities should be afforded to the ryots to get green manure from the forests and seeds should be distributed free to the ryots to raise manure crops. Pasture lands should not be assigned away for cultivation ; and where there were no such lands, provision should be made for some.

(3) Loans of money should be advanced to purchase seeds and other agricultural requisites.

The Member next referred to irrigation and said that the storage of water in tanks in areas fed by the monsoon was one of the wisest methods for increasing the productivity of the land, but to the misfortune of the country, a policy was adopted in recent years of disposing of tank beds and what were known as *talachiras*. It was very necessary that these *chiras* and *chals* should be restored to their original condition, and repairs to all main channels and culverts should be promptly attended to.

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